



We are Colchester



Colchester
City Council

We Are Colchester Board Meeting

27 February 2025, 1130

Microsoft Teams

Agenda

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest - Simon Blaxill**
2. **Progress Report & Engagement Update - Simon Thorp & Clare Ratcliffe**
3. **Project Spotlight – Digital Forum Queen Street – Simon Mead, Colbea**
4. **Levelling Up Programme update – Matt Sterling**
5. **Issues, Risks & Mitigations - 'You said, we did' – Michelle Tarbun, Richard Kendrew, Matt Sterling, Ellen Clark-Romain, Matthew Brown, Simon Thorp**
6. **Decisions and points to note - Simon Blaxill**
7. **Next meeting**



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Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest

Simon Blaxill

Chair



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Progress Report & Engagement Update

Simon Thorp
Programme Manager

Clare Ratcliffe
Engagement Specialist

Headlines

- Good delivery progress across the programme
- Benefits being realised – Digital Skills Hub, Essex Pedal Power, public realm (Balkerne Gate), Youth Facilities (Stanway, Highwoods), Walking and Cycling (Colne Causeway)
- Cost escalation and project complexity being closely managed
- Biggest risk is Greenstead – with resources allocated from Corporate Landlord to ensure delivery is on time
- Partnering arrangements for Digital Forum and Holy Trinity Church have been addressed – focusing on risk mitigation, robust governance and collaboration
- This has enabled the wider team to deliver projects to time and with minimal impact on CCC finances
- Confident that all outstanding projects will be completed or contractually committed within time envelope
- CCC Scrutiny Panel annual update 11 February

RAG overview



Overall programme RAG – AMBER

Time and cost issues are being managed across the programme.



Cost RAG - AMBER

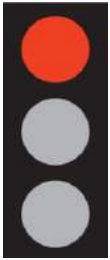
Heart of Greenstead final hub costs still to be confirmed. LCWIP4 costs uncertain until re-tender for East Hill, associated TRO and Safer Streets bid to increase off road sections budget are confirmed. Town Centre & Gateways cost issues have affected various projects.



Time RAG - AMBER

The Heart of Greenstead Hub project has a challenging timetable.

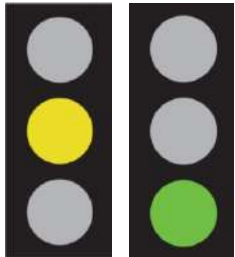
Risk Register



Jumbo – peregrine nest mitigation and planning consent (strategic) - MITIGATED

Greenstead Hub – delivery to time and budget (financial)

Walking and Cycling – East Hill re-tender impact on costs (financial)

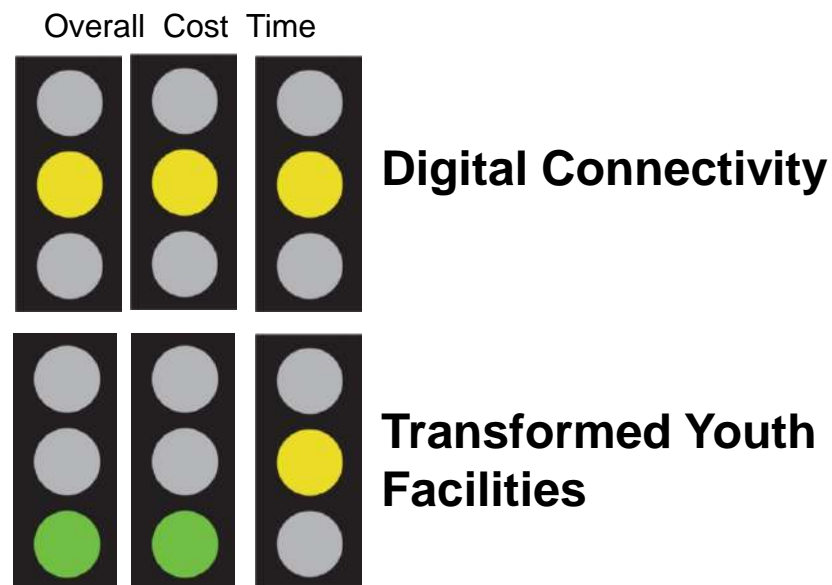


Holy Trinity Church & Digital Forum – tenancy arrangements (strategic) - MITIGATED

Cost inflation – St Nicholas Square etc cost volatility, value engineering, CCC risk (financial)

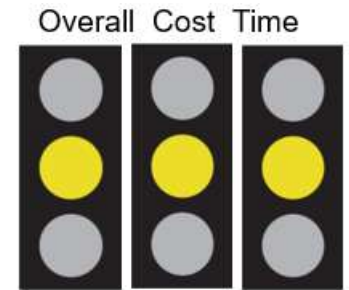
Engagement – implementation, monitoring and updating of engagement plans (strategic)

RAG by theme



(Based on January
2025 progress reports)

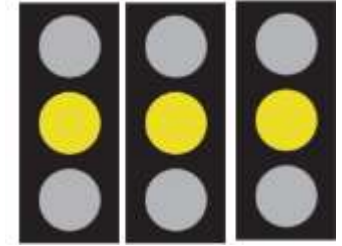
Progress highlights



Heart of Greenstead

- **Hub** - the Integrated Care Board (Health) funding business case approved – exact amount to be confirmed (£400k-?). This is an enabler of improved health provision and a larger Hub – eg. added value.
- Work on GP provision at St Edmund House due to start when funding confirmed.
- Work on the financial modelling, site due diligence, stakeholder engagement and and governance continuing.
- Rent and lease structure review also ongoing with Colchester City Council and Essex County Council Estates Teams.
- All Town Deal funding expected to be committed in 2025.
- **Greenstead Liveable Neighbourhood** - on site works to deliver the School Street works scheduled for February 2025 (half term).
- **Essex Pedal Power** – bike handout continues.

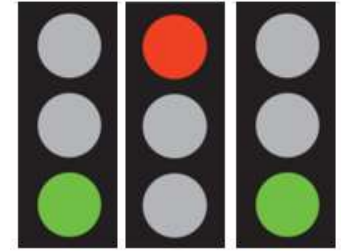
Progress highlights



Town Centre & Gateways

- **St Nicholas Square** - due to complete March/April 2025
- **Jumbo and Balkerne Gate** - £8m Heritage Fund award; remaining Town Deal enabling budget will be spent in 2025. Planning consent granted. Balkerne Gate public realm works to align with Jumbo plan.
- **Holy Trinity Church and Square** - Heritage Fund application pushed back to August, St Helena have been appointed as managing operator, remaining £400k of Town Deal budget will be used to carry out repairs between March and September 2025. Work on the Square is expected to start in September, with completion by December/January.
- **Lexden Gardens/Essex County Hospital** – site visit being rescheduled w/c 17 March. On track for public realm works start in autumn.

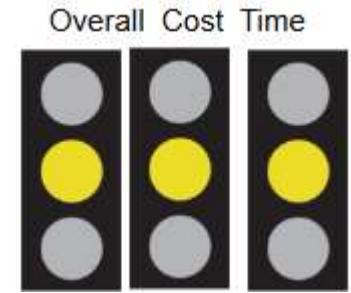
Progress highlights



Physical Connectivity - Walking and Cycling route

- Re-procurement of route sections 1-3 (East Hill) in progress, on site works expected by June.
- Safer Streets funding bid (£500k) to be submitted in February for off road sections 4-7 (The Moors) – to enhance lighting, CCTV and WiFi.
- Grounds maintenance being factored into ongoing costs.
- Letters of support from Leader, University of Essex and We Are Colchester.
- Progress continuing towards CCC highway adoption and permitted development.
- Section 8 (Colne Causeway) completed.

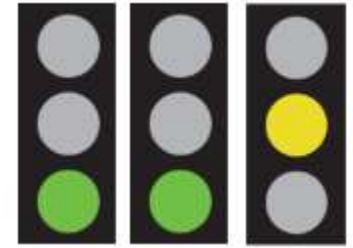
Progress highlights



Digital Connectivity

- **Digital Forum** - concession agreement reached with Colbea as managing operator, with Colchester City Council owning the building.
- Colbea have committed £25k capital in support of fit out.
- Completion and fit-out of and onboarding of tenants scheduled for January-May 2025. Opening and launch - June 2025.
- **5G** - on site infrastructure works are expected to be completed by April 2025. Completion date for the AR/VR visitor experience phase will follow.
- **Digital Skills Hub** – benefits being realised 1 year + on from re-opening.

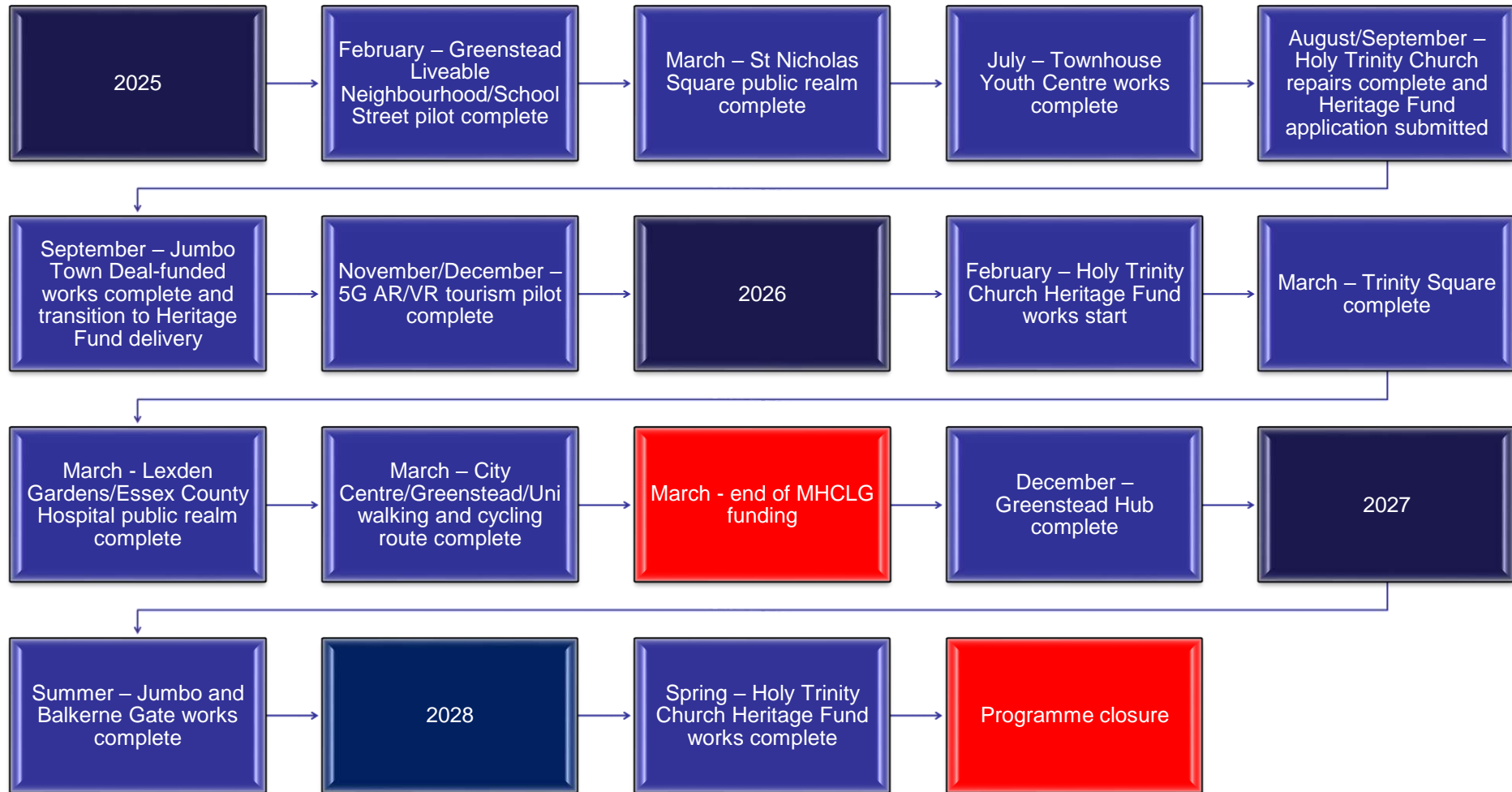
Progress highlights



Transformed Youth Facilities

- **Townhouse Youth Centre** – floor plan fixed, interior designs being finalised, contractors on site March (completion by June/July then project closure).
- **Stanway and Highwoods** completed.

Key milestones



BUDGET OVERVIEW

Total project budgets, Town Deal funding elements and unmitigated overspend position	Project	Project Total	Budget	Town Deal Funding	Unmitigated Overspend
Heart of Greenstead	Multi-agency Community Hub	£5.9M	£5.9M	£5.9M	Being calculated
	Essex Pedal Power	£320K	£320K	£320K	£0
	Liveable Neighbourhoods	£300K	£300k	£300k	£0
City Centre Schemes	St Nicholas Square	£1.6M	£1.6M	£1.25M	£0
	Trinity Square	£600K	£600K	£600k	£0
	Essex County Hospital Public Realm	£488K	£488K	£488k	£0
	Holy Trinity Church	£2.8M	£2.8M	£500k	£0
	Jumbo / Balcerne Gate Phase 2	£1.781M	£1.781M	£1.781M	£0
Transformed Youth Facilities	Townhouse	£1M	£1M	£1M	£0
	Stanway	£120K	£120K	£120K	£0
	Highwoods	£170K	£170K	£170K	£0
Physical Connectivity	LCWIP4	Being calculated	£4.6M	£2.88M	Being calculated
Digital Connectivity	Digital Forum/Working Hub	£6.25M	£6.3M (full budget TD and other funding)	£879K	~£50K
	Digital Skills Hub	£879K	£879K	£879K	£0
	5G	£977K	£977K	£977K	£0

OUTCOMES/BENEFITS REALISATION

Heart of Greenstead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved community facilities delivered• 68 people supported into employment• Pedal Power - 700 bikes distributed• Liveable Neighbourhood – school street pilot delivered• 4 jobs created/protected
City Centre & Gateways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 heritage buildings restored – Jumbo and Holy Trinity Church• 83 jobs created or protected• Public realm improved – St Nicholas Square, Balcerne Gate, Lexden Gardens
Digital Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digi Skills Hub – 210 people supported into employment, 5% increase in relevant qualifications issued• Digi Forum – 10 jobs created/protected• 5G – 36,000 VR users, 5 B2B users reporting improved experience (Digi Forum), 10 additional enterprises with 30mbps + broadband
Physical Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4.8km of new cycle way• 5% change in journey habits – modal shift from car to walking/cycling
Transformed Youth Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Youth Centres refurbished• 250 Life skills sessions delivered, 450 Work life skills sessions delivered, 55 youth groups using centres, 500 Young people attending sessions in centres, 1,000 Skills and knowledge increased outcomes, 900 attendances / members, improved engagement and social mixing (qualitative)• improved variety of services and opportunities (qualitative)• increased footfall – Townhouse (1,000 attendances)• Permanent job created

Comms & Engagement

- Residents panel tours – plus upcoming project sessions
- Youth panel visit - whole session booked in June
- Arranging a Jumbo climb
- Continue to engage with the Civic Society
- Attended meeting of Parish Clerks
- City Cllr updates
- Regular updates to the BID office

Offered BID members/ PubWatch members update

- Continuing to support city centre businesses through our Comms channels and starting to work more closely to promote through/ alongside Colchester Events Company



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Project Spotlight: Digital Forum Queen Street

Simon Mead

Chief Executive, Colbea

And We Are Colchester Board Member

The Digital Forum

Coming Summer 2025

colbea

A space to work, learn & grow

HAIR SALON GROUP

43
QUEEN ST

WARRINGTON
ACCOMMODATION



Transforming Colchester's former Bus Depot on Queen Street

Office Spec

- Café on site
- Event space
- Rooftop Boardroom and Balcony
- 10GBPS connection with WIFI7
- 9 Office Suites (480 -1,000 Sq ft)
- Creative co-working hot desks
- 3 minutes to Colchester Town Station



Digital Forum Prospective Tenants

VR / AR

Creative
Marketing

Design
Agency

Digital
Media

Digital
Trainers

App
Developer
s

Digital
Nomad
s

Animation

Robotics

Creative
Freelancers

Technolog
y & IT

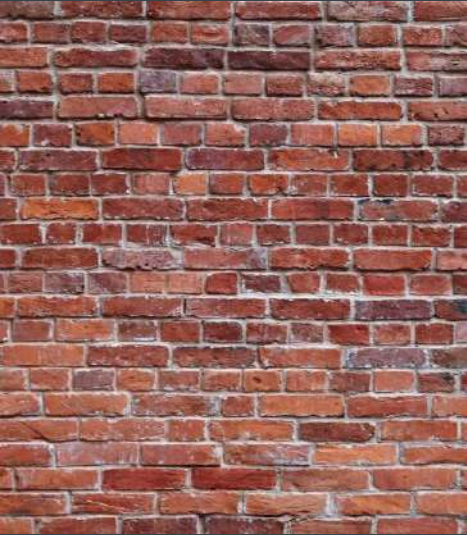
Green
Tech

5G Smart
Cities

AI

Digital
Artists

MedTec



Look and Feel

Exposed red brick, steel accents, green plants, industrial concrete, pop of colour



**FREEPORT
EAST**

**Felixstowe
Gateway 14
Harwich**

Stakeholder Leads

**INVEST
Essex**



Enquiries

- 1 George Williams Way, Essex, CO1 2JS
- Call: 01206 548833
- Email: enquiries@colbea.co.uk
- Hours: 9:00AM – 5:00PM Mon-Fri



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Levelling Up Programme Update



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Issues, Risks & Mitigations – you said, we did

Recap on decisions to be actioned from 28 November 2024 meeting

Heart of Greenstead

Action	Lead	Update
Board directed that updates on progress and costs be presented at future meetings.	Rory Doyle	<p>Appointed architect working towards final designs, for the Greenstead community centre and library. Concept designs to be shared.</p> <p>St Edmund House refurbishment to be managed by Hawthorn Surgery (Ground Floor) and Colchester Borough Homes (First & Second Floors). Meeting with Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust re use of St Edmund House, discussions ongoing. HRA to fund works on first and second floors.</p> <p>Support to ICB for additional funding grant agreement, continuing. Heads of Terms being agreed.</p> <p>Procurement strategy scoping begun to ensure timescales for the procurement of Design & Build contractor are met. Delegated cabinet approval being reviewed.</p> <p>Due diligence of the site continuing. Structural surveys taking place in coming weeks. Financial viability workshop on 28th February with stakeholders.</p> <p>LDP Deepening £150k (Capital Funding) approved and to be released from April.</p>

Heart of Greenstead Phase 1 Programs

The Heart of Greenstead phase 1 campus development, has multiple commencement of works programs, to meet the required outcomes for organisations working on site.

Greenstead Community Centre & Library Program Highlights:

- Procurement Period (Two Stage Tender) - Main Contractor Contract Awarded (Contractually Committed): **30 April - 20 October 2025**
Planning Permission Approval: **31 July 2025**
- Commencement of Works - **9 December 2025**
Completion - **10 December 2026**

St Edmund House Ground Floor, GP health provision Program Highlights:

Build Contractor has already been procured by Hawthorn GP Surgery


- Approval of the Head of Term's – **Early March 2025**
Commencement of Works - **End of March 2025**
Completion & Operational - **April 2025**

St Edmund House First and Second floors Program Highlights:

Build contractor procurement and works to be managed by Colchester Borough Homes. Final program to be approved on 12 March by CBH.

- Contractor appointed – TBC
- Commencement of Works - **Summer 2025**
- CBH estimated move date to St Edmunds House – **End of September 2025**

Holy Trinity Church

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Update on Heritage Fund application expected to be submitted in May 2025, risks and assurances on completion of all works and re-opening of the building by Spring 2028.</p> 	Matt Sterling	<p>The Heritage Fund application has been pushed back to August, meanwhile St Helena have been appointed as managing operator and the remaining £400k of Town Deal budget will be used to carry out repairs between March and September 2025. The Business Plan, Activity Plan, Historic Interpretation Plan and Evaluation Plan are currently in development for review by Heritage Fund May 2025. Links are being made with the other heritage projects notably Jumbo. The delivery stage is now projected to run for 2 years from February 2026, with final opening projected Spring 2028</p>

Trinity Square

Action	Lead	Update
Update on the delivery timeline including planned contractor appointment prior to commencement of works in late 2025 and update on risk management.	Matt Sterling	Building consent and drainage issues have been prioritised. Work on the Square is expected to start in September, with completion by December/January 2026.

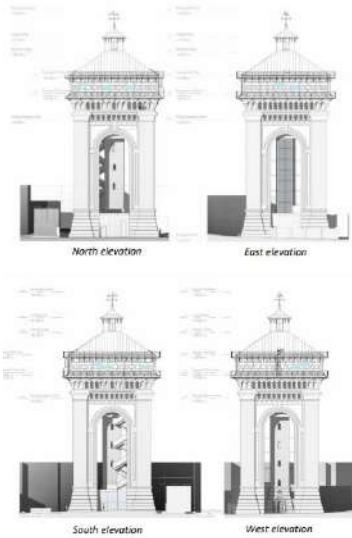
St Nicholas Square



Action	Lead	Update
Update on resuming works in January 2025 and completion in March 2025.	Matt Sterling	Practical completion now likely mid-end of April. Delays have been mainly due to further archaeological finds and weather alongside ongoing Highways issues. Reflections and lessons learned being incorporated into other project delivery.

Jumbo & Balkerne Gate

Action	Lead	Update
Update on progress regarding planning application and mitigation of the peregrine falcon nesting issue alongside the outcome of the Heritage Fund bid.	Matt Sterling	An award of £8m has been confirmed from Heritage Fund. Planning and listed building consent has been granted by the council. A mitigation strategy for the peregrines has also been confirmed, which includes sites at the University and Town Hall. On site work is expected to commence by October, with the tower opening to the public in Summer 2027.



JUMBO WATER TOWER

OPTION 1 ELEVATIONS

PURCELL



PURCELL



JUMBO WATER TOWER

OPTION 1 FLOOR PLANS

PURCELL

Walking and Cycling route

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Update on re-procurement of route sections 1-3 (East Hill) and on-site works planned to commence by June 2025.</p> <p>Update on route sections 4-7 (off road through the Moors) and Safer Streets funding or value engineering, with highway adoption continuing by ECC to enable permitted development without a planning application needed.</p>	Ellen Clark-Romain	<p>Reprocurement of East Hill sections 1-3 is in progress for April 2025 with on-site works expected by July 2025 (subject to ECC governance and if a new Traffic Regulation order is required). A Safer Streets funding bid (£500k) is due to be submitted in February for off road sections 4-7 (The Moors) – to enhance lighting, CCTV and public Wi-Fi. Future maintenance requirements have been considered. Letters of support from the council Leader, University of Essex and We Are Colchester will accompany the bid. Progress has also continued towards Essex County Council highway adoption and permitted development. Section 8 of the route (Colne Causeway) has been completed.</p>

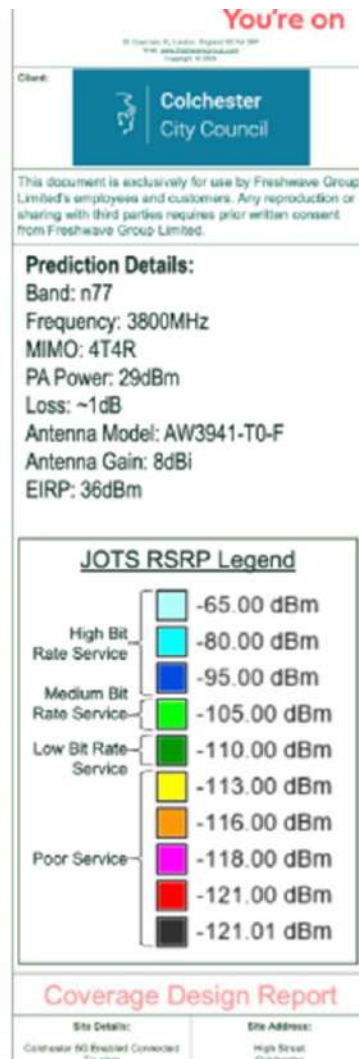
Digital Forum

Action	Lead	Update
Update on the concession agreement reached with Colbea (who will act as managing operator with Colchester City Council owning the building). Update on Colbea funding commitment of £25k capital in support of fit out. Update on completion and fit-out of building and onboarding of tenants Jan-May 2025, with opening and launch May/June 2025.	Matthew Brown	A concession agreement has been agreed and licences for end tenants are now being prepared. Colbea's commitment of £25k for furnishing and fit out has now been matched with £20k CCC funding from the city centre strategic reserve. Completion and onboarding of tenants is scheduled to May 2025, with opening and launch from July 2025.

5G

Action	Lead	Update
Update on progress of on-site infrastructure works started in September 2024, completion by April 2025 and completion date for the AR/VR visitor experience phase.	Matthew Brown	On site infrastructure works to enable wider commercial opportunities are expected to be completed by April 2025. Completion date for the AR/VR visitor experience phase by end 2025 will follow, focused by agreement with the Museums Service on animating the Castle/Roman Walls.

- 5G
- Core network – 10 'small cells' infrastructure
- Provides solid commercial opportunities for CCC
- Enables VR recreation of Castle history (e.g. scalable tourism use case)
- Other future content-generation opportunities (e.g. Holy Trinity Church, Jumbo)



Transformed youth facilities

Action	Lead	Update
Update on re-tendering of Townhouse Youth Centre works with contractor appointment by late 2024, on site March 2025 and completion of works by May/June 2025.	Glenn Crickmore	<p>Works start on 10 March - centre closed to groups from 24 February to allow Youth Service to remove and clear unwanted items/ furniture. Completion date forecast for July 2025</p> <p>Designs are vibrant - LED lights, fun designs with teaching kitchen on the upper floor with seating area and Youth Service office. Ground floor will have new climbing wall in sports hall with improved acoustics, dedicated console games room, VR rooms and social areas Lower ground has new music recording studio, purpose-built storage, new toilet, group space with teaching areas - can double up as a performance area.</p>





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Decisions & Next Meeting

Simon Blaxill

Decisions

Board are invited to note the following:

To note:

1. **Programme-wide progress and planned activities.**
2. **Key risks including cost mitigations and contingencies.**
3. **Current project timelines, milestones and risk management (including any specific 'you said, we did' actions arising from the last Board meeting).**

Next meeting

22 May 2025

Future meetings

21 August 2025

26 November 2025

25 February 2026